

(Washington, DC) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) made the following statement regarding National Teacher Appreciation Week and National Teacher Day:

"As our nation's children enter the school system, they begin spending more time in the classroom than they do with their parents. That's why, this week, we celebrate the efforts and achievements of America's educators through our observance of National Teacher Appreciation Week and today's recognition of National Teacher Day.

"Behind every scientific breakthrough, every bestselling novel, and every successful business, there stands a chain of remarkable individuals who have decided to dedicate their lives to the seminal practice of opening minds and promoting growth of character and capacity. In truth, teachers hold positions of exceptional consequence, as it is their responsibility to help transform the most vulnerable members of our population—our children—into strong, productive, innovative members of society. Classrooms serve as a child's first community, in which lessons of emotional and social intelligence are just as prevalent as intellectual and academic pursuits. Teachers not only facilitate classroom learning, but also serve as role models for the young people who come to them each day for learning and guidance.

"Through tireless commitment, innovative methods, and a remarkable passion for promoting learning and opportunity, educators have made incredible strides in the past several decades. The dropout rate for U.S. high school students decreased from 14 percent in 1980 to eight percent in 2008. American universities are consistently ranked among the best in the world, and the ranking of American 15-year-olds on scientific literacy skills has risen internationally since 2006. The obstacles faced by our nation's educators are certainly considerable as they aim to prepare young people for the challenges and competition of a global society, and we use this week of commemoration to express our unending gratitude and support as they pursue their goals.

"We all have memories of those special teachers who truly made a difference in our lives, and I urge everyone to recognize those individuals this week by letting them know how their efforts have made a profound impact."

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings serves as Senior Member of the House Rules Committee, Ranking Democratic Member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and Democratic Chairman of the

Florida Delegation.

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